


Holmgång ruleset - 2025

Rules video

Most information found in this rules document can also be found in video format on the @holmgang.competition youtube channel. The video is from last year but is still up to date. The video does not include weapon specifications.

Link:

 [Holmgång Ruleset 2024](#)

Format

Holmgång 2025 is a competition in HEMA, taking place over two days. The competition has 6 disciplines.

Day 1:

1. Beginners' Longsword
2. Women's Longsword
3. Open Longsword

day 2:

4. Open Single Rapier
5. Open Sword & Buckler
6. Open Sabre

The beginner's Longsword is aimed at fencer's who have no or little experience competing in Longsword. (There are however no definite limitations regarding previous competition attendance or performance).

The women's Longsword is aimed at all women.

The Open tournaments are open to any and all fencers.

Each discipline will be fought in a pool stage followed by a direct elimination stage.

We aim to have a pool size of 6 fencers.

We aim to advance ALL FENCERS to the direct elimination stage.

In each pool all fencers will fence one match against each opponent within the pool in a round-robin manner.

After all the matches in the pool-stage have been concluded, the fencers will be ranked according to:

1. Number of wins

2. Total points difference (points gained minus points gained by opponent)
3. Points gained
4. Points gained by opponent

The eliminations-stage will consist of a seeded single-elimination bracket, including a bronze-final match.

The gold-final match and the bronze-final match will be best-of-three bouts.

Gear requirements

Before the first match in each pool-stage the fencers will undergo a mandatory gear check by the referees, in order to make sure all fencers have proper protective gear.

The tournament manager and referees reserve the right to re-check any fencer for the duration of the competition.

If a fencer does not meet the minimal gear requirements they are not allowed to compete.

Here follows the minimal gear requirement:

- Fencing mask, CEN-1 certified, min. 350N rated. Mustn't have concave dents in the mesh.
- Back of head protector.
- Separate throat protector with a hard plate.
- Fencing jacket, min. 350N rated.
- Gloves of proper protective level (depending on discipline).
- Fencing pants, min. 350N rated.
- Athletics cup. (Mandatory for men, optional for others.)
- Hard joint protectors on elbows and knees.
- Shin protectors.
- Shoes.

Additionally:

- No bare skin is allowed.
- The equipment must fit well enough to protect as intended, as well as not be displaced too easily.
- The equipment must not be worn or broken to such a degree that its protective quality is questionable.
- The equipment shall not be made of metal.

Bring your own weapon

The fencers are responsible for bringing their own weapon. The weapons will be checked as a part of the gear check.

The referees reserve the right to reject any weapon that they do not see fit for safe fencing.

Longsword:

- The longsword must be of a feder model.

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- The longsword must have a rolled or spatulated tip.
- The longsword must not have side rings on the guard.
- The longsword must not be longer than 136 cm.
- The longsword must have a flex weight of <13,5 kg. (point on scales, pressure applied from pommel)

Rapier:

- The rapier's blade must be no longer than 115 cm.
- The rapier must weigh between 750-1500 grams.
- The rapier must have a well-fastened tip protection.

Arming sword:

- The sword must be of an arming sword model
- The sword must have a rolled or spatulated tip.
- The sword must not have a complex guard.
- The sword must not be longer than 100 cm.

Buckler:

- The buckler must be round with a central boss.
- The buckler must not have a diameter larger than 35 cm.
- The buckler must not have spikes or other outsticking elements.

Sabre:

- The sabre must be recognizable as a sabre.
- The sabre must have a rolled or spatulated tip.
- The sabre must not be longer than 105 cm.

The Match

Each match two fencers will compete against each other over several exchanges, until a score limit (cap) or time limit (time) is reached, after which the fencer with the most points is declared the winner. If both fencers have the same amount of points at the end of the match the match is a draw.

The match will take place on mats with an area of 7x5 m.

The match will be refereed by a head referee and an assistant referee. Both referees are equipped with flags, one for each fencer.

Before the match starts the fencers shall take their corners. The head referee shall make sure the fencers are ready to fence by calling "Fencer ready?!" to each fencer. After confirmation from both fencers the head referee shall ask the fencers to "Salute!", after which the first exchange may be started.

Each exchange starts by the head referee calling “Fence!” and ends when a referee calls “Break!”. A referee calls “Break!” as soon as they perceive a scoring action, or an action which warrants a warning. Both the head and assistant referee can call “Break!”.

After “Break!”, both referees signal with their flags which scoring actions they perceived, after which the head referee gives out points and warnings accordingly.

If the referees are not in exact agreement, they must confer. If after conferring, when they raise their flags for the second time, they are still not in agreement, the highest point values (1 or 2) awarded by either referee to each fencer count. The referees shall aim to confer no longer than 5 seconds.

In order to score with a weapon action the hit must be made with the point or edge of the blade (or pommel or boss of the buckler, when applicable). There is no requirement on hardness of hits (and fencers are discouraged from using unnecessary force, dangerous behaviour will result in a warning), but blade-body contact that was clearly only a glancing touch performed with very little to no force or intent, does not count as a scoring action.

All scoring actions from both fencers that were initiated before the initial breaking action was concluded shall score points.

Additionally, all scoring actions that were initiated immediately and without hesitation after the breaking action was concluded, and performed without pause or feint, shall score points.

Any other action initiated after the breaking action was concluded shall not score any points.

Scoring actions:

- Weapon actions:
 - Longsword
 - 2 Points is scored for:
 - Thrust to the torso, head, or neck.
 - Cuts and slices to the head or neck.
 - 1 point is scored for:
 - Thrusts to the arms, or legs.
 - Cuts and slices to the torso, arms, or legs.
 - Pommel strikes to the face or side of the head.
 - One-handed thrusts, cuts, and slices regardless of target.
 - Sabre
 - 2 Points is scored for:
 - Thrust to the torso, head, or neck.
 - Cuts and slices to the head or neck.
 - 1 point is scored for:
 - Thrusts to the arms, or legs.
 - Cuts and slices to the torso, arms, or legs.
 - Sword and buckler
 - 2 Points is scored for:
 - Thrust to the torso, head, or neck.

- Cuts and slices to the head or neck.
- 1 point is scored for:
 - Thrusts to the arms, or legs
 - Cuts and slices to the torso, arms, or legs.
 - Buckler strikes with the boss of the buckler to the face or side of the head.
- Rapier
 - 2 Points is scored for:
 - Thrust to the torso, head, or neck.
 - 1 point is scored for:
 - Thrusts to the arms, or legs
 - Cuts and slices to the head, neck, torso, arms, or legs.
- Other scoring actions
 - Domination (1 points)

Any situation where one fencer controls the opponent's body in such a way that the opponent falls to the ground in a controlled manner, or could clearly be thrown to the ground by the fencer.

or

Any situation where one fencer controls the opponent's body in such a way that the fencer could clearly strike the opponent without being parried or struck themselves.
 - Disarm (2 points)

Any situation where one fencer loses their weapon and is out of grappling distance.
 - Ring-out (1 point)

Any situation where one fencer no longer has both feet inside the fencing area.

If scoring weapon actions happens before or simultaneously as a dominance, disarm, or ring-out, ONLY the weapon actions shall be counted.

Illegal actions, resulting in a Warning.

- Striking illegal target (cannot score)
 - Back of head.
 - Spine
 - Back of the knee.
 - Feet, including Achilles tendon.
 - Crotch-area.
 - Palm(s) of the weapon-hand(s).
 - Pommel and buckler strikes to the top of the head.
- Fencing before "Fence!"
- Fencing after "Break!"
- (Sword and buckler) Striking with the rim of the buckler.
- Any technique applying force to joints against their range of motion
- Punching or kicking the opponent

- Shoving the opponent off the mat
- Unsporting behaviour
- Dangerous behaviour
- Influencing the referees (e.g. self-calling or tapping the spot you got hit).
- Not being ready to start the match on time.
- (Rapier) Grabbing and holding the weak of the blade.

End of the match

When at least one fencer reaches 12 points or above the match is over.

If the match time reaches 3 minutes before the cap is reached, the referee calls out "Last Exchange!" indicating that the ongoing exchange (or the upcoming exchange if 3 minutes is reached in the short pause between exchanges) will be the last of the match.

The time starts when "Fence!" is called for the first exchange. The time does not stop in between exchanges, unless a referee calls for a time-out, which shall be done if the break between exchanges is expected to last for an unusually long time.

After the match the fencer with the most points is declared the winner. If both fencers finish the match with the same number of points the match is declared a draw.

If the match ends in a draw and is in the direct elimination stage, the match goes on to a sudden death scenario where one additional exchange is fought until one fencer has more points than the other.

Warnings

If a fencer receives a warning, they may be penalized, depending on the number of previous warnings received in the match.

- First warning: No penalty.
- Second warning: 1 Point deduction (score can not go below 0).
- Third warning: 3 points deduction (score can not go below 0).
- Fourth warning: Match loss 0-12.

If the illegal action is grievous, the referees may choose to move directly to a more severe penalty step.

Halting the match

The referees or the medic may at any point halt the match, in order to assess if a fencer may or may not continue the match due to injury or risk of injury.

The referees may also halt the match in order to re-check the gear of a fencer if they have reason to believe that it no longer meets the minimal requirements.

A fencer may at any point halt the match in order to withdraw from the match, resulting in a 0-12 Loss.

Disqualification

At any time a referee may motion to the tournament manager to disqualify a fencer from the competition. The decision to disqualify a fencer is reserved by the tournament manager. The tournament manager is mandated to interview the fencer in question, the referee, and any relevant witness before deciding to disqualify the fencer.

Any decision to disqualify a fencer must be founded in a belief that the continued presence of the fencer is harmful to the competition, fencers, staff, or audience.

If a fencer is disqualified they must leave the premises urgently.